



# The Bali Process

on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime

*Eighth Ministerial Conference, Adelaide, Australia, 10 February 2023*

## **Co-Chairs' Statement**

1. The Eighth Ministerial Conference and Third Government and Business Forum of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process) co-chaired by the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and Australia were held in Adelaide, Australia, 10 February 2023. The meetings reviewed developments in the Bali Process region, and agreed priorities to address emerging challenges in relation to people smuggling and human trafficking.
2. The Ministerial Conference reaffirmed the mandate of the Bali Process and marked the occasion of its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. Ministers confirmed the enduring importance of the Bali Process as a voluntary, inclusive and non-binding forum for policy dialogue, information-sharing and capacity building, to promote and facilitate regional consensus and collaboration to strengthen the collective capacity to address challenges within its mandate. The Conference provided an opportunity for Ministers and their representatives (herein referred to as 'Ministers') to review developments since the Seventh Ministerial Conference and reaffirm the commitments of the 2016 and 2018 Ministerial Declarations and Co-Chairs' Statements. It also marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Regional Cooperation Framework, which resulted in the establishment of the Regional Support Office. Ministers expressed their appreciation for the efforts committed by all since the last Conference. Ministers also commended the engagement of Bali Process members with the Regional Support Office and encouraged ongoing support to deliver the forward plan.
3. Ministers acknowledged that regional and global developments that heighten risks for regional security and stability, including the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, the use and misuse of technology, including trafficking in persons into online scams, natural and humanitarian, including climate-related, disasters, have exacerbated irregular migration concerns for Bali Process members. They expressed particular concern that women, children and persons with disabilities, continue to be disproportionately affected.
4. Ministers acknowledged the increase in dangerous irregular migration movements, through land, water, and air by displaced populations, and the challenges for the region to address these issues. Ministers recognised the need to prevent, disrupt, and prosecute the criminal syndicates involved in the trafficking in persons in this context. They also recognised the efforts of members hosting displaced populations. They acknowledged members' significant efforts to rescue and support victims of trafficking and criminal exploitation based on humanitarian considerations.

5. Ministers recognised that strong, clear public messaging is essential to promote safe migration pathways and prevent loss of life at sea. Ministerial Co-Chairs asked the Regional Support Office to work with affected states and deliver a public messaging workshop to strengthen members' strategic messaging capacities and to support coherent and coordinated delivery of public messaging, as well as to enhance coordination among law enforcement authorities to prevent, disrupt, and prosecute the criminal networks.
6. Ministers expressed deep concern at the scale of online scam operations by criminal syndicates which have become a significant driver of human trafficking in the region. They emphasised the need to address increasing incidents of people being trafficked to work in online scam operations as an issue of priority.
7. Ministers also expressed grave concern at the loss of life and exploitation of persons by people smugglers, human traffickers and other criminal networks. Ministers acknowledged that responses must be comprehensive and integrated, while accommodating the specific circumstances faced by individual member countries and the vulnerabilities of victims.
8. Ministers welcomed progress in Bali Process cooperation and capacity building since the Seventh Ministerial Conference, including the significant progress towards the implementation of the 2018 'Strategy for Cooperation'. Through its working groups, other engagement mechanisms and the Regional Support Office, the Bali Process has promoted information exchange, shared good practices, built capacity, and facilitated joint actions to uncover and disrupt criminal networks and protect victims of trafficking and exploitation.
9. Ministers commended Members' efforts to continue Bali Process engagements during the pandemic in a virtual format. Ministers acknowledged the value of maintaining flexible arrangements for Bali Process meetings moving forward, while noting the value of in-person meetings for strengthening informal links between Bali Process members.
10. Ministers endorsed the working groups' efforts to address challenges and trends, emerging as a result of the pandemic and the sharing of lessons learned on dignified, safe, and sustainable returns and reintegration of migrants to home countries. Ministers acknowledged the importance of the Bali Process in following regional developments and fostering cooperation between members to prevent and respond to relevant, emerging issues. Ministers welcomed strengthened collaboration with business and civil society, as well as with regional organisations, including ASEAN, and relevant consultation initiatives.
11. Ministers and business leaders commended the progress already made by the GABF to combat trafficking in persons, forced labour, modern slavery, and the worst forms of child labour through implementing the priorities of the 'Acknowledge. Act. Advance.' (AAA) Recommendations.
12. Ministers and business leaders noted the critical role that public-private sector partnerships will play in addressing the increasing online job scam situation and encouraged members and business leaders to identify and find practical ways that technology businesses in particular can prevent and disrupt these crimes.
13. Ministers and business leaders welcomed further engagement between the working groups of the Bali Process with the GABF to promote greater supply chain transparency, ethical recruitment, protection for victims and survivors and access to redress mechanisms.

14. Co-Chair Ministers, mindful of discussions under the GABF, are committed to undertake closer collaboration with the Business Co-Chairs and invite the Business Co-Chairs to develop tangible recommendations and concrete goals and outcomes.
15. Ministers reaffirmed the need for a future-focused approach to changing patterns of people smuggling, human trafficking and related transnational crime in the Bali Process region. They committed to:
  - a. Implement an updated 2023 Adelaide Strategy for Cooperation that reflects the current challenges faced by Bali Process members;
  - b. Enhance the capabilities of law enforcement authorities to leverage technology to combat people smuggling, human trafficking, and related transnational crimes;
  - c. Promote safe and legal migration for sustainable long-term impact and raise public awareness of the risks of irregular migration, including online scams and their connection to human trafficking;
  - d. Task the Senior Officials to strengthen cooperation through facilitation of policy dialogue, information-sharing, and capacity building, including to respond the current challenges of trafficking into online scam operations, and further ask the Regional Support Office to conduct study and develop concrete recommendations;
  - e. Advance voluntary, sustainable and dignified returns and address challenges associated with the mass return of irregular migrants, the repatriation of victims of trafficking, and the drivers of re-migration;
  - f. Continue collaboration with the private sector, with particular emphasis on digital technology.
16. Ministers agreed to remain seized of the matter of the recent irregular maritime movements in the Andaman Sea. In this regard, Co-Chair Ministers tasked the Senior Officials Co-Chairs to reactivate the Consultation Mechanism in response to this matter, to explore options for Bali Process engagement and support.
17. Ministers reaffirmed the importance of promoting the work of the Bali Process and providing access to key information and available resources for members and the public. In this regard, they welcomed the ongoing efforts to refresh the Bali Process and Regional Support Office websites.
18. Attending the meeting were representatives from Australia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Fiji, France, Hong Kong, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, Tonga, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Viet Nam, ILO, IOM, UNHCR and UNODC.
19. Also attending were representatives from the following observers Canada, Finland, Germany, Italy, Russia, International Federation of the Red Cross and Interpol.
20. Appreciation was expressed to Australia for hosting the meetings, the Business Co-Chairs, Walk Free Foundation and Adaro for their contribution to the *Government and Business Forum*, and for technical contributions by IOM, UNHCR and UNODC across the range of Bali Process activities, and for administrative support provided by IOM.